

# Partnership for Sustainable Communities Brownfields Pilots

## Background

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) are working together under the Partnership for Sustainable Communities to ensure that federal investments, policies, and actions do not subsidize sprawl, but instead support development in more efficient and sustainable locations. The Partnership selected five community pilot projects to receive direct technical assistance from EPA including:

- Planning for the eventual assessment, cleanup and sustainable redevelopment of brownfield sites and the associated long term quality of life improvements
- Area-wide brownfield redevelopment planning
- Access to expert environmental and economic analysis

Other potential areas of technical assistance from EPA include addressing community needs such as affordable housing creation and preservation; access to transit, air and water quality improvements; access to fresh, local food; energy efficiency improvements; renewable energy strategies; and access to green space for recreation. HUD and DOT will serve on the technical assistance teams and will help identify how these pilots can complement and build on their past and future investments, as well as identify opportunities to bring relevant resources from their agencies as the pilots progress.

## Pilot Project Descriptions

### Fairmount Line – Boston, Massachusetts

Organizations in the Boston area have cleaned up many brownfields along this commuter rail line, and the Pilot will build upon these successes by creating a transit-oriented development (TOD) village on the site of a former brownfield. The community is also interested in cleaning up and redeveloping additional brownfields in the area; however, they do not want current residents to be displaced when redevelopment occurs. HUD, DOT, and EPA will assist the

### Pilot Project Goals:

- Quickly apply and build upon working relationships between HUD, DOT, EPA and local stakeholders.
- Identify barriers and opportunities for programmatic and policy changes across all three agencies.
- Maximize the impact of available federal resources on transit, housing and brownfields.
- Ensure the equitable redevelopment of brownfields sites near transit.
- Gather lessons for implementing area-wide planning approaches.

community with TOD planning to help minimize displacement of existing residents and encourage development of affordable housing. Federal assistance will also help increase the capacity of nonprofit housing providers, such as community development corporations, to clean up and redevelop brownfield properties. Assistance could also help to develop public- and private-sector partnerships within the community to leverage investment in brownfields redevelopment projects.

### Smart Growth Redevelopment District – Indianapolis, Indiana

In Indianapolis's Smart Growth Redevelopment District, the community plans to redevelop brownfields for green infrastructure, urban agriculture, affordable housing, and new commercial development. The Pilot will focus on two areas within the District: a former railyard that will be redeveloped to support urban agriculture, and two former maintenance facilities that will be redeveloped as affordable housing and permanent supportive housing units. HUD, DOT, and EPA will assist the community with developing a land reuse plan to support urban agriculture at the former railyard that will include environmental design components, neighborhood strategies and local policies necessary to make reuse successful, and an

implementation plan. The federal partners will also help the community develop form-based codes to support brownfield site reuse planning and green building design. Once these codes are successfully applied, they will serve as a model for other sites within the Redevelopment District.

### **Riverfront Crossings District – Iowa City, Iowa**

Iowa City plans to redevelop brownfields in its Riverfront Crossing District to create a walkable, urban neighborhood close to a proposed light rail stop. This will provide residents with a mix of uses including affordable housing; ground floor retail and office space; pedestrian-oriented streetscapes; entertainment and recreational facilities; and public open space and trails along the Iowa River. HUD, DOT, and EPA will assist the community with developing a strategy to identify, clean up, and redevelop brownfields and other sites within the District. Federal assistance will also help the community to plan for sustainable, mixed-use redevelopment to revitalize an area within Iowa City affected by recent flooding.

### **La Alma/South Lincoln Park – Denver, Colorado**

The Denver Housing Authority and EPA have identified redevelopment opportunities in the community of La Alma/South Lincoln Park (LASLiP). Technical assistance needs include: the design and construction of green buildings; storm water control best management practices in traffic control corridors; green job generation through community gardens and fresh food markets; the promotion of energy efficiency, including renewable energy; the reuse and recycling of demolition materials; and promoting water efficient buildings and infrastructure. In the last few months, Regional, EPA, HUD and DOT representatives have been meeting on a regular basis to identify and leverage relevant programs and resource leveraging. HUD has already committed \$10 million in grants to the LASLiP effort.

### **Westside Affordable Housing Transit-Oriented Development – National City, California**

National City, California has requested assistance in creating and implementing a sustainability plan and financial strategy for a 14-acre brownfield site. The brownfield was once the state's largest auto mall and home to heavy industrial and commercial services, the closures of which have disproportionately impacted residents in the Westside area. Research has shown this community to be at risk, with a density of 389 polluters per square mile and more than 50 percent of adults with no health insurance. HUD, DOT, and EPA will assist the community in developing a plan to address the former brownfield and focus on green building and energy-efficient redevelopment plans that incorporate storm water and flood control management. Known as the Westside Affordable Transit-Oriented Development, this project has received funding from HUD, DOT and the State of California.

*The information presented in this fact sheet comes from the proposal for technical assistance; EPA cannot attest to the accuracy of this information. The implementation plan for the technical assistance has not yet been finalized. Therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.*